

The Lost World

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Author: ThatPersonYouMightKnow

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Summary: Simba, Nala and Haiba discover a lost world of prehistoric secrets, and unearth a sinister conspiracy...

***Chapter 1*: Chapter 1: The Hunters**

AN: This should prove to be quite an interesting story. All of them will have to be, seeing as there are only five more stories left in the series before I retire. I'm sure all of you are itching to see what has become of Haiba and Tama after the events of the previous story. And yes, you can expect more twists and turns as a result.

The Lost World

Chapter One: The Hunters

"Yeehaw! Let's go hunting, boys!"

The group moved like lightning across the great rocky plain, kicking up dust and dirt as they travelled in search of their prey. If anyone were watching them, then they would only see a yellowy mist of obscurity. They were highly skilled, and far too fast for any predators to detect them.

Everyone knew who they were. They were feared and renowned throughout the area for spreading mass panic and destruction. The animals nearby were smart enough to know that if you got too close to them, then you were done for. They would hunt you down—just like the rest of their prey—and most likely consume you for their supper. They took nothing but delight in their torture of others as they rampaged through the dusty plains, causing havoc everywhere they went.

They were the hunters, and nothing would stop them from taking their kill.

"Move over, Bosi," Maono said, shoving his friend to the side. "I can't see them properly."

"Keep your yap shut, Maono," Bosi said, his claws gripping over the edge of the rocky incline as they observed the desert-like plains. "You're supposed to be the one with the perfect vision. Can't you see 'em from here?"

For two grown adult lions, Maono and Bosi squabbled like cubs quite often. They'd both grown up together on the plains, as part of a very small pride. Becoming accustomed to the intense heat was difficult out here, but by now they were used to it. They also knew most of the plains off by heart, so it wasn't too hard for them to find a way back after venturing out into the distance to explore.

"I have forty-sixty vision, ya twerp," Maono said. "I know what I be looking at through these here parts."

"Then keep looking," Bosi ordered.

"I don't know what in the heck they're thinking," Maono said, shaking his head. "Them hunters are always out here, tryin' to disrupt our way of livin'!"

"They been comin' here for years," Bosi said, shrugging as if it were nothing. "What different does it make?"

"It makes all the difference, Bosi," Maono replied. "They keep wreckin' everything. They're always huntin' those spiky-spicks or whatever the heck they're called."

"It's Spikeosaurai, ya addle-brain," Bosi corrected him. "You know nothin' about this here world we be livin' in."

"Well, it ain't my fault that we've grown up around here!" Maono said. "I'd rather be up there with the tops!" He gestured to the sky.

Bosi rolled his eyes. "You don't wanna go mingling around with the tops, Maono! There ain't no telling what goes on up there!"

"Better being up there than down here," Maono responded, staring across the vast expanse of dirt that made up the endless plains. "It's all so... so *empty*."

"You just need to stop being such a dreamer," Bosi said. "There ain't nothing up there for you, Maono!"

"Aw, shut up, Bosi," Maono snapped. "You don't be understandin' what I'm sayin'."

"Are you gonna keep on yakking or are you gonna watch those ruffians like you're supposed to be doin'?" Bosi asked. "I ain't got time for your complainin'."

"Well, what *do* you got time to be doin'?" Maono asked, snapping his eyes back onto the ground below them. To the untrained eye, all that could be seen was the dirt and dust that stretched on for miles and miles and miles. Everything looked pretty dark, due to the odd absence of both the sun and the moon.

But Maono did have pretty good vision, despite his apparent lack of intelligence in all other areas. To him, he could easily see the large cloud of dust that was racing towards them all. And that could only signal one thing.

That the hunters were nearby.

"There they are, Bosi!" Maono exclaimed in delight, pointing them out with a claw. "That's them!"

Bosi narrowed his eyes, struggling to see through the darkened surroundings. His eyes had never really adjusted to the extremely low level of light out here in the plains. Growing up was tough around these parts. "Oh, yeah," he said, soon beginning to smile. "That be them, all right."

"Do you think they'll be stoppin' nearby?" Maono asked, looking excited at the thought. "Then maybe we can give 'em the ol' one-two, right?"

"Oh, come on," Bosi said, unable to believe what his friend was saying. "You think you're gonna be able to take on them hunters? They've been killing simple folk like us for years and years!"

"I don't even know what a year is," Maono said. "Sounds like a really long time, Bosi."

"That's 'cause it *is* a really long time, Maono!" Bosi exclaimed. "It's somethin' like fifty-six days."

"Wow," said Maono. "That's almost like four months!"

"I don't even know what those things are," Bosi said, squinting as he tried to get a look at the fast-approaching hunters. "They're not like any animals I've ever seen before."

"This is a crazy world that we be livin' in," Maono said. "And them hunters are makin' it worse. Someone has to take a stand. Someone has to stop 'em!"

"You wouldn't even know *how* to stop 'em!" Bosi said, smacking Maono across the top of his head.

He rubbed his throbbing head in pain. "Ow. That sure hurt, Bosi."

"That was the whole darn point, Maono!" Bosi told him. "Now, supposin' that we can somehow get a closer look at them hunters—"

"You mean we get to see 'em?" exclaimed Maono.

"You're not gonna kill 'em, stupid," Bosi snapped. "'Cause I know that's what you be thinkin'. We just need to *observe* 'em. It's what they call a 'learnin' experience'."

"Oh. Okay," Maono said. He narrowed his eyes, and suddenly a look of surprise came across his face. "What in tarnation?" he exclaimed. "They just disappeared!"

"What?" Bosi followed his gaze, and saw too that the cloud of dust had completely vanished. "Well, where in the heck did they go? No one can just vanish like that!"

Bosi's knowledge of the world around him was very limited, thanks to the total lack of education. He certainly wasn't used to the concept of there being animals that possessed magical powers, such as being able to disappear from one spot and reappear in another. He didn't even know that the word 'magic' even existed.

But then it didn't matter. The hunters didn't use magic. They were just very fast. Faster than anyone else in the strange world where they lived.

And they would always catch their prey.

"This ain't possible, Bosi," Maono said. "It's like they're demons or something! I've never seen such a spectacle before!"

"We'd better get out of here," Bosi said, suddenly looking very worried. The hunters were far more powerful than he first thought. "Before they do somethin' horrible to us! I've already heard loads of stories about what they've been doin' to other lions in the area."

"I remember what they did to that body," Maono said, shuddering at the ugly thought. "The whole thing was ripped apart! Right from his chest! I ain't never seen so much blood before!"

"You'll be seeing it again," said a voice from behind them.

The two lions gasped at each other, turning around to face the new arrival.

Or, to be more specific, *arrivals*.

It was the hunters.

There were four of them in all. A lion, a lioness, a tiger and a baboon.

"Well, lookie here," said the lion. He was obviously the leader of the four. Both his fur and mane were a dirty light-brown colour, stained with dust from the plains. "We got ourselves some kill, boys."

"Y'all shouldn't have come this way," threatened the lioness. She looked almost the same as her mate. "You're gonna be payin' the price for it."

The tiger chuckled, grinning at the two terrified lions. His sharp fangs were visible even in the poorly illuminated area. "I've been waitin' to kill me some lions for a long while, now," he said. "I'm tired of feedin' off those stegs all the time."

"You're tellin' me," said the baboon. "It'll be a relief to finally cook us some proper meat for dinner."

"You get on outta here!" Bosi yelled at him. "We got the rest of the pride comin' for us, and if they find you guys here, then you're in for it!"

"It's a bluff," said the lioness, turning to her mate. "He ain't got a lyin' bone in his body!"

"You won't get away with this," Bosi said courageously, even though he knew that his death was quiet obviously imminent.

"Save your breath," snapped the lion. "You ain't got a hope in hell of ever being rescued. What do you say, guys?" he asked the rest of them. "Shall we tuck in?"

"Yeah!" exclaimed the tiger. "I'm starvin'!"

Maono and Bosi cowered in fear as the hunters leapt at them.

Bosi, however, being cleverer than his friend, rolled out of the way at the last moment. He could only watch helplessly as Maono was devoured before his eyes, chewed to bits in seconds by the hunters. They didn't seem to notice that he had escaped. As if they went into some sort of trance upon starting their meal.

Slowly stumbling backwards, Bosi turned around and made a run for it. He didn't look back at the hunters, fearing that they would chase him down in seconds if they saw that he was trying to get away from them.

He looked up at the stony sky above them. For once, he wished that didn't live in a world that was contained completely underground. That was why there was no sun. That was why there was no moon. That was why everyone was so unintelligent. They were cut off from anything above. Completely imprisoned.

This was the lost world.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: The Kiss

Chapter Two: The Kiss

"My life is a mess," Haiba said, combing a paw through the fur on top of his head as he slowly awoke. He rubbed some sleep from his eyes, looking around. "My life is a complete and total mess."

He yawned, recognising the river that he had fallen asleep beside. *I haven't moved in a day*, Haiba thought. He struggled to recall the events of the previous day. They all seemed quite a blur. *What happened?* he wondered. *I was sitting here, and then Tama came along, and—*

His thoughts suddenly seemed to stop, as the memories slammed back into his mind. "Oh, no," he moaned, pushing his head into his forepaws. "Now I remember."

He felt absolutely ashamed at his actions. He couldn't believe what had happened. It was all so silly—and slightly exciting—but Haiba had done it anyway. *Why did I do it?* he asked himself, unable to come up with a suitable answer.

Truth be told, Haiba had no idea why he did it. He wasn't the type of cub who would give in to being aggressively assaulted—in a romantic sense, of course—but Tama seemed so different... He couldn't figure it out.

Tama had visited Haiba yesterday by the riverside. Whether she had followed him, or they just happened to be there at the same time, he had no idea. All he knew was that she had kissed him. Kissing him for quite a long time, in fact. Actually, it could be suggested that they had been kissing all evening.

But Haiba wasn't concerned with how long they had been doing it for. He was scared. Scared of what was going to happen as a result of this. For example, just how would Tama react? She hadn't exactly been in the most stable of states recently—due to the horrific death of her mate-to-be, Tojo—but what reason was that for kissing Haiba? Was she even aware of what she was doing? Somehow, Haiba doubted that her actions had anything to do with having feelings for him...

Haiba slowly climbed to his paws, walking off towards Jowai Resort. *I have to see her*, he thought. *I can't just let this go.*

He knew that he had to confront her. This wasn't just something that they could forget about within a few hours. They were serious—to him, at least. He wanted to know why she had done such a thing. This wasn't her like her. If anything, he would expect Tama to clobber him to a pulp if he so much as tried to even *hug* her.

I hope she hasn't told anyone else, Haiba thought worriedly. What would Simba and Nala think of him if Tama had gone blabbing all about what they had done together? They knew how much he loved anything and everything, but this was just on a whole new level. Tama's boyfriend had just died, and now he was taking advantage of her? What if they kicked him out of the group? He didn't know how he would manage to survive on his own...

I've got a bad feeling about this, Haiba thought, as the resort came into view. *This isn't going to end well...*

"So what's the next move?" Nala asked, pacing back and forth around the riverside. "We've been searching for ages, and we *still* can't find a wizard! What are we supposed to do about that, Simba? I'm starting to get hungry. We're running out of food. That Jowai Resort supply isn't going to last for ever, you know!"

"Yeah, I know," Simba said, thinking back to the time when he and the others had planned a massive robbery in order to steal some food from the resort. But that didn't go so well. Still, it ended somewhat positively: they were now *living* in resort. Granted, all of the lionesses who lived there before them were dead, but Simba didn't particularly care. They had decided to make their living out here; they should have anticipated that some cannibals might try to eat them.

"You're not helping much," Nala said. "You're just sitting there, doing nothing. What if we run out of food, Simba? What if we *starve*?"

"We're not going to starve," Simba said. "I already spoke to a wizard. Yesterday."

That wasn't exactly true. Just yesterday, Simba had quite an interesting encounter with an evil serpent known as Nyoka. The snake had wanted to kill Simba in order to copy a spell using his body that would enable him to control the entire jungle. The spell in particular that Nyoka wished to emulate was the same spell that surrounded the Pride Lands, preventing it from being tampered with in any other magical way. All the serpent knew was that the spell was the dark work of the most horrifying creature imaginable—but Simba had no idea who that might be.

"You spoke to a wizard?" Nala repeated. "*Yesterday?* Simba, we were with you all day yesterday, and we never saw a thing. Now you're just lying to me."

"That snake," Simba said. "Remember? He was magical. And he told me. He said that the spell was the dark work of the most horrifying creature imaginable."

"And he told you this right before he tried to kill you?" Nala asked, somehow doubting that.

"I suppose it was to lull me into a... false sense of security," Simba replied calmly, as he casually examined his claws. "After he told me, he lashed out with his fangs. So I did the only thing I could and had to kill him."

"You killed a snake?" Nala said, somewhat horrified. "That's not like you."

"Desperate times call for desperate measures," Simba responded. "Kill or be killed. I did what I had to do to survive."

He lay on his back, smiling up at the sky. He felt a little... empowered by the events of the previous day. Murdering Nyoka—in cold blood, no less—was seen as a great achievement by him. It was as though he was finally taking the next step in the path to becoming the ultimate survival expert. Sooner or later, the predators—such as that snake—would learn to fear him. No one would dare to attack him ever again.

Murder was now a necessary option. If anyone else tried to assault him, then he would show them no mercy. They deserved to die. He was the only animal in this jungle who was trying to do something good. All he wanted was his home back, and they were hassling him for it. Well, he was going to show them who was the boss around here.

Simba wasn't going to be in danger. He would *become* the danger.

"The most horrifying creature we can imagine." Nala thought for a moment. "Death?"

Simba chuckled. "That loser?" he said. "I don't think so. He's history."

If I can kill him, then I can kill anyone, he mused. The memory of defeating that psychopath Death once and for all was a pleasing one indeed. One of his greatest victories, for certain. There was no telling what else he might be able to achieve...

"It must be someone new, then," Nala concluded. "But what would they even need that kind of spell for? It's like we're missing a crucial piece of information." She had to admit, the whole situation was very confusing. Even with more information coming in, she still felt none the wiser as to what was going on. "Maybe we should tell— Oh, there he is."

Nala saw Haiba storming towards them, a determined look on his face. He also looked quite angry, for some reason. "Haiba!" She narrowed her eyes when she saw how furious he seemed. "Haiba?"

Haiba pushed past Nala, almost knocking her to the ground. "*Hey!*" she cried in surprise, staring at him in disbelief as he walked away. "Haiba, what the heck are you doing?"

"What's his problem?" Simba asked, resulting in a shrug from Nala.

Neither of them knew.

Haiba stomped into the mass of trees. "Tama!" he called. "Where are you?" He got no answer. "*Tama!*"

"Keep your voice down," Tama said. She was nestled away in the low deformed trunk of a tree, lying down casually. "Someone might hear you."

Haiba practically dived at her. "Just what the heck was that all about last night?" he demanded.

"What was what about?" Tama asked, not even bothering to look at him.

"You *know* what I mean," Haiba snarled. "Why did you do it? Why did you kiss me?"

Tama chuckled. "Oh. *That.*"

"Stop playing dumb!" Haiba yelled, in no mood to play around with her. "Just tell me why you did it!"

Tama shrugged at Haiba, giving him a blank look. "I don't know," she said. "Because I felt like it?"

Haiba whacked the trunk of the tree in frustration. "You don't understand," he said. "What if this gets out? What will Simba and Nala think if you tell them?"

"Who says I'm going to tell them?" Tama said.

Haiba stared into her eyes. "Well... well, that's okay, then. Just keep your mouth shut about it." He turned and began to walk away, only for Tama's voice to sound off again.

"I won't tell them," Tama said, "if you listen to me."

"Huh?" Haiba turned around, confused. "And just what is *that* supposed to mean?"

"I won't tell Simba and Nala about our 'quality time' together," Tama explained, "if you'll do it again with me."

Haiba just stared at her. "No way," he said. "I'm not kissing you again."

"Oh, well, then," Tama said. "I suppose I guess I'll just have to have a tearful confession in front of Simba and Nala about how you used me. I'm sure they wouldn't be too happy about that."

Haiba couldn't believe what he was hearing. "You're... you're blackmailing me," he stammered, horrified that Tama would say such a thing.

"That's right," Tama said with a smile. "You see, Haiba, I'm desperate for some attention. My heart was shattered after Tojo's death—and I need you to fix that with some nice hugs and kisses. I want to be loved again. And I'll do whatever it takes to secure that."

"I won't do it," Haiba said, shaking his head. "I'll tell Simba and Nala the truth."

"Who are they gonna believe?" Tama said. "The cub who wants to date everything and everyone in the world or a sensitive, heartbroken cub such as myself? You decide, Haiba."

Haiba stared down at the ground, defeated. He knew that he couldn't win. Tama was completely in control of the situation. There was no way Simba and Nala would believe anything he said if Tama told them he was abusing her. He had no choice but to give in to Tama's demands.

"Fine," he said. "Fine, I'll... give you attention."

Tama smiled. "I knew you'd see it my way."

Haiba turned around, tears forming in his eyes—

—as a figure suddenly darted past one of the trees.

"What?" Haiba's eyes were fixated on the spot where the figure was. From what he had seen, it looked like an animal. Although it was unlike any animal he had ever seen. Maybe it was a monster, or a demon—or maybe something even worse. "Did you see that?" he asked, turning back to Tama.

Tama looked up at him. "See what?" she asked, sounding very uninterested.

"I thought I saw—" Haiba cut himself off when he saw that Tama was going to be of no help whatsoever. "Never mind. I'll take a look myself."

"Don't forget our arrangement," Tama said. "I'll be expecting to see you again. By the same river. *Tonight*. Be there."

"Whatever," Haiba scoffed, as he continued into the jungle. Whatever he had seen, it had to be nearby. Animal or no animal, he was going to find out. *It looked like it went somewhere over here...*

Haiba disappeared into the distance, leaving a chuckling Tama behind.

AN: Hmm... *now* whose fault is it? Haiba or Tama? She's taking advantage of him now, instead of the other way around. That should provide some interesting points for discussion. I really like the idea of this lost world. It's a bit like an old Western town, isn't it? We haven't seen any prehistoric monsters yet, but maybe Haiba has. Will he get himself into even more trouble? Oh, I'm sure you know the answer to that...

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Mother Haiba

AN: We're going to dive right into a completely new world in these next couple of chapters. Plus, we'll get a little bit of comedy from Haiba. After all, jokes are so hard to come by in this series these days, aren't they? What would you rather have? Series One or Series Five? I know what I'd choose...

626and624: I'm sorry to say that I will be retiring from fan fiction after this series. It's time for me to move on. I'll still be here on my forum, though. I just won't be writing.

Chapter Three: Mother Haiba

Haiba crouched down low as he crept through the bushes, keeping a close eye out for the figure that he had just seen. Whether it was just any normal animal that lived in the jungle or a creature of monstrous proportions, he didn't care. To be honest, anything that would take his mind off of Tama and her horrible blackmail was welcomed by him. Even if that meant risking life and limb for some sort of heroic cause—which was quite often, actually.

It had to have gone over here somewhere, he thought, carefully observing the surroundings. The trees and bushes looked so tightly packed together that it was hard to see anything else. If that thing—whatever it was—was here, then it was certainly well hidden. *It was definitely heading in this direction...*

He stepped out from behind a tall bush, being as quiet as he possibly could so not to attract the attention of the creature or monster or whatever the heck it was.

"Hello?" he called gently. "Any... ugly creatures hanging around here? I'm friendly. Honest. I'll even give you a hug—if it's necessary, that is."

Not that I particularly feel like hugging anyone, he thought. He then frowned. *Jeez, did I just really say that? Look what's happening to you, Haiba—you're losing your edge*. He shook his head, and continued off into the bushes, keeping a close eye out for anything odd. "Hello? Someone? Anyone?"

Haiba gasped as he felt something brush behind him. "Wah! Who is that?"

This is awful, Haiba thought worriedly. *Is this how I'm supposed to spend the rest of my life? Walking around in fear while being followed by some kind of hideous creature? Oh, someone just kill me now...*

Haiba felt a slight chill upon that last thought. "Actually, no. Don't kill me," he whispered. "I don't want to die yet. Not at all, actually."

But he couldn't shake off this funny feeling. He was beginning to see why Nala seemed so concerned yesterday. In fact, she had the very same feeling as he did. It felt horrible. As if his whole life was coming to a halt. He felt like...

He felt like the end was near.

Haiba shook off the ominous feeling, and turned around to head back to the resort. If something was going to attack, then he'd rather that he was with his friends as opposed to being completely alone.

As long as I don't have to see Tama's ugly face again, then I'm happy, he thought, sighing. He knew that he would have to engage in a lengthy make-out session with Tama tonight. Grief or no grief, what she was doing was just plain wrong. But he didn't have a choice. If she told Simba and Nala that he was taking advantage of her, then he was done for! They would banish him for ever! And, seeing as how Simba had taken a very dramatic turn of personality, Haiba feared that the former Pride Lands prince might view him as a threat that needed to be eliminated...

Just as Haiba was about to walk back into the maze of trees, something horrifying and ugly jumped out right in front of him!

Haiba let out one of his typical high-pitched screams, falling onto his back as he looked on in disgust at the horrific thing.

It was a baby dinosaur.

In fact, it looked like a little tyrannosaurus baby. It blinked at Haiba with big green eyes, smiling innocently at him.

Haiba just screamed and screamed, having never seen such a creature in his life. He was far too preoccupied with the huge teeth and large jaws to concern himself with his relatively cute appearance.

"*Demon!*" Haiba yelled, pointing at it with a shaky claw. "Demon from the... the demon place!"

The baby dinosaur cocked its head to the side, unsure of what to make of him. It made a little squeak of curiosity, as if studying Haiba.

"Please don't eat me," Haiba said. "I'm too young—and handsome, too!"

The baby tyrannosaur slowly stalked towards him, causing Haiba to squirm in fear, backing up against a tree trunk. But the young dinosaur had him trapped. He was going to be eaten. He was sure of it. What monster with teeth like that *didn't* eat cubs like him?

Haiba shut his eyes tightly, unable to do anything but accept his grisly fate. He was going to be mauled—by a baby, no less!

I never even got to kiss Nala, were his last thoughts as the dinosaur closed in.

And then it nuzzled him on the cheek.

Slowly, Haiba's eyes flickered open. "Huh?"

He stared, confused, at the baby tyrannosaur. And the baby tyrannosaur stared back, still smiling. "You're... you're not eating me." Haiba couldn't exactly say that he was disappointed by this realisation.

The dinosaur nuzzled him again. "Okay," Haiba said, shuffling from his spot by the tree. "Okay, this is weird. It's like you're... it's like you're attracted to me, somehow. Which is strange, considering we only just met. I don't normally get this attached on a first date. Well, I do—but I don't tell anyone that."

The dinosaur just stared at him.

Haiba sighed, rolling his eyes. "Right. I get it. You don't understand a word I'm saying, do you, you freakishly cute... *thing?*"

The dinosaur's mouth slowly dropped open, and for a second Haiba thought that the baby might swallow him whole. But instead, it spoke.

"Mama?"

The scream from Haiba's mouth filled the jungle with noise.

Simba and Nala shot up upon from their spots upon hearing the high-pitched scream.

"If I knew that Haiba didn't scream like that, then I would have thought it was a girl," Nala said.

"Can't he stay out of trouble for more than one minute?" Simba complained. "I have more important things to worry about than him scratching his leg or something."

"That's not a very nice thing to say, Simba," Nala replied, stunned that he would say such a thing. Weren't he and Haiba supposed to be best friends? "If it were you in trouble, then he would come straight to your rescue."

Simba just waved a paw in the air, sounding as though he didn't care. "Ah, whatever," he said briefly, before walking past her. "In my opinion, I think that cubs like him should be able to take care of themselves. I really don't have time to come to everyone's rescue. We should just focus on ourselves."

"Okay." Nala stood her ground. She wasn't going to move until she'd figured out what was going on with Simba. He just wasn't being himself. "You spend all this time trying to get over your parents' deaths and you go right back to being miserable. What's up with you?"

"Nothing's up with me," Simba said, turning around to face her. "I've never been better." He spoke the truth. He was truly convinced now that he felt stronger than he ever had before. "Now, come on. Let's go see what trouble he's gotten himself into. Maybe it'll teach him a lesson to be more cautious in the future."

Nala gritted her teeth, growling loudly as she followed after Simba.

And, just for a second, her eyes showed a flicker of red...

Simba and Nala followed the sound of Haiba's screams to find him hidden away in a cluster of tall bushes.

And there was someone with him.

"What the...?" Nala was lost for words. She had never seen such a creature before in her life. It looked so vicious and surprisingly cute at the same time. "What *is* that?"

"Haiba, what the heck have you done this time?" Simba demanded, staring at the monster with curiosity. "What is that thing?"

"I don't know!" Haiba cried, trying to pull away from the baby tyrannosaurus. But it had him stuck fast in a tight hug. "It was watching me earlier! Then it came up to me, and I thought I was going to be eaten. But I wasn't. It just won't let me go! It thinks I'm its mother!"

"All the time you hunger for romantic attention," Nala said. "And now that you've got it, you're *complaining*?"

"This isn't the type of romance I was expecting," Haiba hissed. "I'm no mother!"

"Well, there's a first time for everything," Simba said, striding over to the baby dinosaur. He examined it carefully. The baby tyrannosaurus looked at him with fear. Simba prodded him in the stomach. The baby lashed out in response with its sharp teeth. Simba recoiled before it could bite off his paw. "Vicious little creep."

"Simba, it's only a baby," Nala said, looking down on the creature. "It's kind of... cute, in a way."

"Please get it off me," Haiba begged. "I'll do anything. I'll even kiss Tama—I mean, Nala. I'll kiss you, Nala."

"No thanks," Nala said. She looked around, finding it hard to believe that this creature had come from anywhere in the jungle. "This creature can't be from around here," she decided. "Haiba, did you see what direction it came from?"

"No," Haiba replied, shaking his head. "I barely caught a glimpse of it until about five minutes ago. And it *still* won't let go!" He struggled to break away from the baby, but it held him tight. "Come on, baby! Mommy wants you to let go!"

"Mama," the baby squeaked, nuzzling the side of Haiba's head.

"This is agony," Haiba said. "You have to help me, guys." A sudden thought struck him. "We have to get it back to its *real* mother."

"Oh, yeah—that'll be easy," Nala said sarcastically. "We don't know where it came from and we have no idea what the rest of its kind look like. It's going to be the easiest thing we've ever had to do."

"Look, it has to have come from somewhere," Simba said, walking around the area in circles. "Maybe it left some tracks or something, I don't know. Or maybe—"

The last thing Nala and Haiba heard from Simba was his loud scream as he fell through the ground.

"Simba!" Nala dove to the spot where he once stood, staring down at the hole he had fallen through. "Are you okay?"

"It's very dark down here," Simba replied, his voice echoing from beneath. "You'd better be careful when climbing down."

"Who says we're gonna climb down?" Nala asked. "Get back up here!"

"I think this is where they came from," Simba said. "I can see claw marks all over the ground. It looks like they belong to that... whatever it is. Come down here and we can get this mess over with."

"Haiba, come on," Nala said to him. "Let's go and return this thing to its parents."

Haiba grunted as he rose to his paws. "Come on, baby," he said to the little tyrannosaurus. "I'm gonna take you to your *real* mommy and daddy. Wouldn't you like that?"

The dinosaur grinned at him as they walked along, towards the hole in the ground.

They had no idea of the world they would find beneath...

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: Dawn of the Dinosaurs

Chapter Four: Dawn of the Dinosaurs

"Okay," Simba said, as he, Nala and Haiba kept on moving through the bleak darkness. They had ended up in a very rocky tunnel. Where it led, they didn't know. But Simba had a hunch that the dinosaur must have made it to ground level this way. He'd never heard of these creatures before. They must have been hiding underground for millions of years... "We just need to get that thing back to its parents, and then go back home. We have more important things to worry about."

"I sense an incredibly dangerous adventure up ahead," Haiba said, looking nervously at the baby tyrannosaur, as it stayed right by his side. They were almost touching, he was that close. *Why does everything bad always happen to me?* he complained. *First Tama blackmails me, and now this creature thinks I'm its mother. What's a cub gotta do around here to get some peace and quiet?*

"It's really dark down here," Nala said, straining to see. "Can't there just be a *little* light?"

"Well, if this cave opens up, then there will be," Haiba told her. "There are always little holes or cracks in the ground that allow light to shine through. You can't just keep this place in complete darkness. Otherwise all these creatures would be practically blind."

"I think I see *something*," Simba said, squinting through the darkness. "There's a light at the end of the tunnel!"

"That's something," Haiba said optimistically. "Then maybe I can get rid of this very annoying baby."

The baby dinosaur seemed to take that as a compliment, and licked him across the cheek. Haiba just sighed. "If I had a wildebeest for every drop of drool that I've been covered in, then I would have a lot of wildebeest."

"It's getting easier to see," Nala said, her eyes slowly adjusting to the golden light at the end of the tunnel. "I wonder what we'll find up ahead..."

"Oh, I don't think it'll be that much," Simba said. "I bet that guy's probably the last of his kind. We'll probably find just a very small cave."

As Simba reached the end of the tunnel, he discovered that his prediction was very wrong indeed.

Nala and Haiba joined him on either side, stunned by what they were seeing. "Okay," Nala said. "So maybe it's a bit bigger than that."

They were looking out at on a whole new world. Bright sunlight shone down from millions and millions of cracks in the rocky ceiling high above them, illuminating the glorious waterfalls and thriving forests that were dotted around the incredible area. It was like a jungle underneath the jungle, and it seemed to go on for ever. Neverending.

But that wasn't the only thing. They could see dinosaurs for miles and miles, of all different shapes and sizes. The three cubs gasped as a pterodactyl screeched past them, soaring high into the air. They could see a brontosaurus chewing on the long leaves of what appeared to be a palm tree. And in the distance, a very large tyrannosaur seemed to be devouring the remains of a lion's corpse...

"Whoa..." Nala said, stunned by what she was seeing. "There's a whole world under here, and we never even knew it!"

"Incredible," remarked Simba flatly, not particularly concerned with the wonders of this unbelievable discovery. "But we really don't have the time to hang around, guys. Let's just get that little thing back to its parents and—"

"Mama! Mama! Mama!" the baby tyrannosaur exclaimed, hopping up and down as it stared at the much larger tyrannosaur in the distance. It was still feasting on the remains of the lion.

"Is she eating a lion?" Nala asked.

"How do you know it's a she?" Haiba asked.

"Well, aside from the fact that the baby is calling it 'Mama', I can tell the difference between a male and a female," Nala told him. "I'm not stupid, you know."

"I never said you were," Haiba replied. He turned to the baby dinosaur. "Go on, then. Go back to your mother."

The baby grabbed Haiba by the cheeks and planted a big kiss on the muzzle, before hopping down several rocks that led from the tunnel to ground level. Haiba stood there, wiping more saliva from his mouth as he watched the baby return to its mother. "He got over me pretty quickly, then."

"Just be glad that you didn't have to give birth to him," Nala said. "I hear that it's very painful."

"So that's it, then," Simba said, turning around. "Come on. Let's go home."

"What? No way! We can't just leave this world behind without taking a little look around," Nala said eagerly, hopping down some of the rocks. "Who knows what secrets are down here?"

"I'm with Simba on this one, actually," Haiba said. "I don't want to become a parent to triplets or something like that."

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!" Nala told them. "We'll never get a chance like this again!"

"Yeah, but what if we get killed?" Haiba asked, looking around the enormous underground world. "There could be any number of dangerous creatures out there and— Wait a minute." He narrowed his eyes. "Is there grassland over there?"

Simba and Nala turned their heads to the left, and found themselves staring at a great plain of flat land on the horizon. It looked just as infinite as the beautiful area they were in right now.

"It looks emptier over there than it does over here," Nala commented.

"Yeah," Haiba agreed. "I can't see anyone ever deciding to live there. They'd have to be absolute morons."

"Help!"

The three cubs were immediately drawn to the cry for assistance. Their eyes snapped onto a lion stood at the edge of the plains, waving his forepaws frantically in the air. He looked quite distressed.

"Is that... is that a *lion*?" Simba exclaimed, eyes wide with surprise.

"Looks like it," Haiba said. "And he's also looking right at us."

"I don't suppose those creatures will be of much help," Nala said, observing the masses of dinosaurs. "Luckily, we can always help him out." Nala made her way down the rocks, heading in the direction of the desperate lion.

"Where are you going?" Simba asked. "We haven't got time for this."

"Simba, spending a day helping someone else isn't really going to matter," Nala said. "We have all the time in the world."

"Fine." Haiba surrendered to her, following her down the large rocks. "Let's go and see what the guy is ranting about. Maybe I'll get a kiss from him if I do something heroic."

"You can barely see what he looks like," Nala said. "How do you know if he's even your type?"

"*Everyone's my type*," Haiba said. *Except for Tama*, he thought. *I hate her*.

"Guys! You're not focused on the mission!" Simba called, racing after them. "We're supposed to be searching for a way to break that spell over the Pride Lands!"

"It can wait for a day," Nala said, looking over her shoulder. She hopped down to ground level, feeling her paws hit the dry dirt below. "Let's take a break. This place is amazing."

Haiba headed to the left, trying to get a better look at the lion. He was still waving his paws, trying to attract them. "*We're coming!*" he yelled. "Just stay right there!"

"This is a waste of time," Simba muttered under his breath, wanting to just turn around and go back home. He didn't have time for pointless worlds filled with dinosaurs. He didn't care. He was only focused on his mission: getting his home back. That was the only thing that mattered now.

If this keeps up, Simba thought, then my friends are going to become problems as well. And in that case, they'll need to be taken care of...

"Oh, thank the Dino Gods!" cried Bosi as the cubs came into view. "At last! The warriors have arrived to fend off the

hunters!"

"Hello, there," Nala said. She regarded the plains with curiosity. "It's pretty bare around here. Doesn't look like a very exciting place to live. You should move over there."

"If only that were possible, ma'am," said Bosi. "But them dinos over there will tear us to bits if we so much as set a paw in their territory. We have to live on the plains."

"Dinos?" said Simba, raising an eyebrow.

"Short for dinosaurs," Bosi explained. "You gotta watch around them beasts. They'd tear us slowpokes to pieces in the beat of a heart."

"Yes, I noticed..." Nala said, thinking back to the sight of the tyrannosaurus feasting on the lion's corpse. "But we were pretty fine. They didn't attack us."

"That's 'cause you be warriors," Bosi told them. "They fear you! And that why you can help us put a hurt on them hunters!"

"Hunters?" Haiba said. "So... the hunters aren't the dinosaurs?"

"Oh, no," said Bosi, shaking his head. "They be much worse than that. In fact..." He glanced around nervously. "They might return at any time. We'd better get on back to my pride. It'll be much safer for y'all over there."

"Then let's get going," Simba said, moving hurriedly across the plains. "Before any more trouble pops up..."

AN: Haiba makes quite a bad mother, doesn't he? At least this adventure will take his mind off of Tama's blackmail. Let's just hope the hunters don't catch them on the way back to Bosi's pride. Leave your fantastic reviews and I'll see you tomorrow!

***Chapter 5*: Chapter 5: The Plain Pride**

AN: This story is becoming much longer than I expected. Jeez, it's almost as long as a series finale. Not that it is the finale, by the way. You only have to wait five more stories for that.

yeti: No more happy stories, I'm afraid. It's all downhill from here.

anonymous13: Simba is slowly turning towards his dark side. His care for Nala and Haiba lessens with each passing minute. His mission is slowly consuming him. Where will that lead him? We'll find out.

Chapter Five: The Plain Pride

As the plains stretched on for miles and miles, and the boredom sank in, Simba, Nala and Haiba were beginning to wonder if it was better to take their chances with the dinosaurs. It was certainly a far more interesting aspect of this underground world. All Bosi seemed to be doing right now was dragging on the monotony of their journey.

"They say these here plains go on for a thousand metres," Bosi told them. "Why, my ol' pal Maono used to be able to see around for... well, for ever! Still... he be dead now. Them hunters completely eviscerated him."

"Who are these animals?" Nala asked. If they weren't those dinosaurs, then just what kind of creature would maul an animal to shreds? She hoped they were nothing like those ravenous creatures that had eaten Aibu... "They sound even worse than those dinosaurs."

"Oh, they are," Bosi confirmed. "They'll rip you open without even breakin' a sweat."

"Is it far up ahead?" Simba asked, looking like the most tired of the group. And he didn't even want to be here in the first place. He would much rather be searching for something that could restore the Pride Lands rather than helping a bunch of brainless idiots. "We kinda have more important things to be doing."

Nala nudged him on the side. "Simba, don't be so rude," she said, before looking to Bosi. "Ignore him. He's just a little cranky. What did you say your name was, again?"

"I didn't, ma'am," replied Bosi. "But my name be Bosi. What do you guys be callin' yourselves?"

"I'm Nala," she introduced herself. She pointed out the others. "This is Simba, and Haiba."

"I'm in charge of the group," Simba proclaimed pompously. "So you'd better listen to me if you want your problem solved."

"Whatever you say, little warrior," chuckled Bosi. "As soon as we be gettin' to the pride, we can come up with a plan to drive those nasty ol' hunters off the face of the earth! In fact, it's right up ahead!"

Simba and the others saw that Bosi was correct. They had arrived at the edge of an extremely large and wide ditch. It was in this ditch where the pride resided. It wasn't much. Just five or six lions and lionesses lazing around, doing nothing in particular.

"Great pride," Simba remarked. "So these guys get a home and I don't? Where's the fairness in that?"

"I can't wait to introduce y'all to them," Bosi said excitedly. "They'll be sure as hell grateful for your services."

"We don't know how to fight hunters," Haiba whispered in Simba's ear. "Do we?"

"Just shut up," Simba snapped. "I'll think of something."

"Oh. Fine, then," Haiba grumbled, offended. "Be like that, Mr Misery."

Bosi clambered down into the ditch, rushing over to his miniscule pride. "Hey, y'all! I found ourselves an answer to our hunter problem!"

Simba, Nala and Haiba followed his lead to greet the pride. They all quickly gathered round to meet the new arrivals. It clearly wasn't often that they received many visitors to their tiny little home.

"It's amazing that they've managed to live out here in all this heat," Nala said, fanning herself with a paw. "I'm frying out here."

"Who are these strangers you be bringin' here, Bosi?" asked an elderly lion. He looked like the ruler of the pride. His mane looked a very bleak shade of grey and his tan fur was losing some of its colour. He was covered in yellow dust from the dry dirt that composed the ground of the plains. "We don't like no strangers in our pride."

"They all speak in that weird accent," Haiba whispered in Nala's ear. "It's kind of hot."

"Oh, you don't need to worry, Sheriff Afisa," Bosi assured him. "They be very friendly strangers."

"What the heck is a 'sheriff'?" Nala asked, puzzled by the expression.

"Must be some sort of ancient, alien word for 'king'," Haiba suggested. "They're not exactly the smartest animals in the pride. I'm sure their form of education is quite different here than it is up above."

"How do we know we can trust 'em?" Sheriff Afisa asked. "They could be just as treacherous as the dinos—or even the hunters."

"I have my every confidence in them," Bosi said. "They be good souls. I can tell."

"Hmm..." Sheriff Afisa considered the three cubs for a moment. "I don't know... we've had too many problems around here to trust strangers like them."

Simba sighed and rolled his eyes, having had enough of these brainless fools. Couldn't he ever speak with someone *competent* for once? "Look, do you want our help or not? We're very busy warriors. We've got other villains to stop. Villains that are, by the way, much worse than your pathetic little hunters. Now, make your choice—or we're leaving."

Nala and Haiba stared at each other, shocked by how direct Simba was being towards them. Whatever was going on in his mind, it wasn't good. It was as if he believed that he needed to act this way in order to get what he wanted. And that simply wasn't true. They would give anything just to have the old Simba back...

But it didn't seem like that would happen ever again.

Sheriff Afisa shrugged. "Fine. It's not like we got nothin' else to do. Those hunters keep on killin' more and more of our pride off. Only yesterday poor Maono was cut down in his prime. He will be sorely missed by us all." The other lions and lionesses of the pride nodded in solemn approval.

"Yeah. Great." Simba wandered over to the edge of the ditch, observing the area carefully. "What direction do they normally come from?"

"Huh?" said Sheriff Afisa. "What are you jibber-jabbering about?"

Simba turned to him, unable to believe how highly unintelligent this pride was. "What? Direction? Did? They? Come? From?" *Jeez, these animals deserve to die for being so stupid. It's amazing that they've been able to survive out here for this long!*

"Hey—we got no time to be directicating things," Bosi said. "Those guys are scary! They ain't like nothin' we ever seen before!"

"I can think of worse things," Simba said. "Death, for example. So, uh, when do these 'hunters' show up, huh?"

"We don't know," Sheriff Afisa said, shrugging. "They show up whenever they please. They don't have no schedule!"

"Great," Simba said flatly. "So they could show up at any time—without warning—and attack. It's going to be pretty hard to come up with a plan, then."

"Well, they usually come from over there," Bosi said, pointing in front of Simba. "That's where we were when they attacked Maono."

"Finally!" Simba exclaimed, exasperated by how very unhelpful this pride was. "We got there. Now, let's go and check out where the guy was killed. Maybe that'll lead us to those hunters."

"You'd better watch it out there," Sheriff Afisa warned. "You never know when those pterodactylites will pick you up!"

"The what now?" Simba asked, turning around. He was just about to make his way out of the enormous ditch.

"The flying dinos!" exclaimed Sheriff Afisa. "If they pick you up, then you ain't got a hope in hell! They especially like to target the plains. Yeah, we've had a few poor souls get themselves grabbed by those flying dinos. You'd best be looking

after yourselves."

"Yeah, whatever," Simba said, waving a paw in the air. "Come on, guys."

Sheriff Afisa turned to Bosi. "Bosi, go with them. I'm sure they could use your assistance."

"Sure thing, Sheriff Afisa," Bosi said, giving him a salute. "I ain't gonna be no worthless good-for-nothing!" He hurried off after the cubs, joining them as they began to climb out of the large ditch.

"Oh, good," Simba said, sighing at the sight of Bosi. "You're coming with us. That's... great."

"Simba, what's going on in that head of yours?" Nala asked, staring at him angrily. "You're not acting like yourself."

"Let's just say I've recognised how superior we are to other animals like them," Simba replied, not even bothering to look at her. "I can't wait to get out of this place. It's so... pathetic."

Nala scoffed in disbelief as he disappeared over the rim of the ditch. Haiba looked at her, raising his eyebrows. "I think someone's under the control of a big meanie," he told her.

"Hmm..." Nala narrowed her eyes in suspicion. "I get the same feeling. Still doesn't stop me from wanting to slash him across the face, though."

"It was over here somewhere," Bosi said, as they started across the dusty plains once more. "I'm sure of it!"

"Oh, that's good to know," Simba said sarcastically. "As long as you're sure, that's fine. I bet we'll be there in a matter of seconds. Dumb animal..."

"Simba," Nala said. "What did I tell you about being rude?"

"If you follow this guy, you know those dinosaur things are gonna eat you," he told her. "In fact, he's heading in the direction of them right now!"

They approached the end of a rocky incline, as the familiar smell of rotting flesh invaded their noses.

"Oh, that is gross," Nala moaned, staring at the corpse on the ground.

The body of Maono had been completely torn open from the chest. His lungs had been wrenched clean out, rotting remains strewn across the ground. His eyeballs were completely gouged out, leaving only black, lifeless sockets. All four of his legs had been ripped away; just four bloody stumps remained. The foul odour made them all want to be sick. Except for Bosi, though. He seemed accustomed to it.

"Yep," Bosi said. "He's one of the lucky ones."

"The *lucky* ones?" Nala exclaimed, staring at the gory mess in horror.

"Oh, sure," said Bosi. "You shoulda seen what they did to some other lions. There was nothin' left of 'em."

Nala and Haiba exchanged worried glances with each other. Simba just looked down on the corpse with curiosity.

Whatever they were dealing with, it was serious.

Chapter 6: Chapter 6: The Trade

Chapter Six: The Trade

"He's been ripped apart," Nala said, daring to take a closer look at the mangled mess that was all that remained of Maono. "They just... tore his chest open and took everything out. But what for?"

"To eat," said Bosi. "They be hungry hunters."

"Actually, they didn't take everything out," Simba said, lifting up a fold of skin to take a closer look at the inside of Maono's chest. "I think there's still some organs left in there. They're not *total* monsters, at least."

"You caught them on a good day," Bosi told them. "If they were *really* hungry, then there wouldn't be nothin' left of him."

"Now I *really* want to meet these hunters," Simba said, more than invigorated by the examination of the corpse. "Sounds like they've got something secret going on. I'd be very interested to find out what it was..."

"Huh?" Nala didn't understand. "Simba, what do you mean? It looks like this is just a bunch of sick animals eating others. Like the Scavengers."

"No," Simba said, "because the Scavengers would make sure there was nothing left. This was a murder. It was just made to look like a feast. These animals are too dumb to recognise the difference. They're clever. *Very* clever."

Nala couldn't say that this new change in him didn't come with added intelligence. "So it's a... cover-up?" she guessed.

Simba nodded. "Something like that. I think these hunters have some kind of plan. If we can find out where they are, then we might be able to find out what they're up to. And then we can get out of here and carry on with our lives."

"But what would they want to cover up?" Haiba wondered. "All that's here is dirt and dinosaurs. Not much to hide. And this place is underground, anyway—it's *already* hidden."

"We'll find out." Simba turned to Bosi, who had been listening intently to his theories. "Bosi, I'm only gonna ask you this once. Are there any stories or rumours about where the hunters live?"

"Well..." Bosi scratched the back of his neck, as if struggling to recall. Simba urged him on with a nod of his head. "They did always say that them hunters and those dinos are connected in some way."

"So they *are* near the dinosaurs?" Nala asked. "That's what you said, Simba. We were heading in the direction of them."

"Yeah," Simba agreed. "So, if we want to find the hunters, then we need to get back to the dinosaurs."

"I hate dinosaurs," Haiba moaned, remembering how annoying that baby tyrannosaur had been. "*They should all be destroyed!*"

"But that's too mean," Nala said, walking past him. "They'd be extinct."

"Clever girl..." Haiba said through narrowed eyes.

Simba and the others made their way slowly down the rocky incline, heading back towards the beauty and the amazing scenery of the dinosaur world in the distance. It was going to be another lengthy walk—but at least now they were getting somewhere in their investigation.

"What's the best place to keep away from the dinosaurs?" Simba asked Bosi. "I don't want them chewing us to pieces."

"Well, there's always the cliffs," Bosi told him. "Won't give you much help when facing them flying dinos, though. They'll catch you anywheres."

"Then we'll just have to be extra careful," Simba replied.

Upon entering the dinosaur world, Simba and the others were careful to keep out of the line of sight of the dinosaurs. Bosi informed them that most of the creatures were carnivores—or "meaties"—while very few were herbivores—or "veggies". It was likely that the overwhelming majority of these creatures would snap them up for dinner in a second if they got too close.

"I can't say I've had to climb anything this high before," Nala said, digging her claws into the stone. The cubs and Bosi

were climbing a very large pillar of rock. Once they got to the top, they would hopefully be able to get a great view of the entire area. And if the hunters lived nearby, then they might just be able to find them, too.

"Don't look down," Haiba advised. "I've dated cliffs before, you know. One of them was even afraid of heights. I'm not surprised it committed suicide."

"We should be able to see all around," Bosi said. "If you want to find them hunters, then you should be able to spot 'em from here."

"Then let's keep moving," Simba commanded, scaling the cliff even faster now. He was determined to get this mystery solved by sundown. He didn't want to spend any more than a day in this place. The thought of his mission niggled away at the back of his mind. He wished that these lions were able to look after themselves. Instead, it was always *him* who had to solve other animals' problems. Who knew what he might be missing out on right now in the world above?

Simba hoisted himself up onto the circular top of the giant stone pillar, carefully examining the view. If he cared, then he would have found it to be one of the most beautiful sights on earth. They were able to see all around the hidden underground world.

"Wow..." Nala gaped as she stared at the enormous green forests and titanic rivers that littered the space before her. "It's beautiful."

"Stay focused," Simba snapped. "We're looking for the hunters; this isn't a vacation."

Nala resisted the urge to push Simba from the cliff—her eyes glowing red as she thought about the possibility—but instead she kept her mouth shut.

"All right, so where are they?" Haiba asked, studying the area below. "This place is huge. It's going to be hard to find some small animals."

"You should be able to spot 'em easily," Bosi told them. "There are four of 'em."

"Like *them*?" Simba said, pointing confidently towards a singular spot down below.

Nala, Haiba and Bosi followed his gaze to find that he was pointing at a very wide stony ditch at the bottom of the tall pillar. Gathered in the middle of this ditch were the hunters: the lion, the lioness, the tiger and the baboon. But that wasn't the most striking thing about their discovery.

For there was something far worse going on, and it horrified them all.

Far down below, a cluster of dinosaurs were packed together in the huge ditch, looking absolutely miserable. Tyrannosaurs, stegosaurus and pterodactyls were all chained together at the legs by the thickest vines that the cubs had ever seen, rendered completely immobile. For some odd reason, the poor creatures weren't even putting up a fight. They almost looked frozen in place.

The hunters were watching them all, wide grins on their faces. It was quite clear to the cubs that they were in control of this cruelty. But whatever for? That was what didn't make sense to them.

"Oh, no," Nala said, noticing that the tyrannosaurus baby from earlier was also being held prisoner in the ditch. "Just what are those hunters doing?"

"They're holding those dinosaurs prisoner," Haiba said. "But why?"

"I said something was up," Simba said, his suspicions confirmed as he observed the hunters' prisoners. "Come on. I think it's about time we greeted them."

Simba, Nala, Haiba and Bosi quickly scrambled back down the giant stone pillar, rushing towards the ditch to see just what was going on. They stood at the grassy edge, unable to tear their eyes away from a gloomy-looking tyrannosaurus that towered above them. It had to be the mother of the baby that Haiba was harassed by before.

And now she was imprisoned for ever.

"They look so miserable," Nala said sympathetically, staring at the trapped dinosaurs. "Why would anyone do this?"

"I'm going to find out," Simba said, jumping from the edge and sliding down the inner rim of the ditch on his back. He stormed over to the hunters, in no mood to play around with them. It was better to confront these villains directly rather

than trying to figure out their plan through pointless eavesdropping. "So what are you guys doing, then?"

The hunters immediately turned their attention away from their prisoners, and all eyes were on Simba.

"He's going to get himself killed," Bosi said worriedly, as he watched Simba engage with the hunters.

"Who are you?" the lion demanded. Simba decided that he was the leader of the group. "We don't need no cubs from the plains muscling in on our territory."

"Save the threats," Simba said. "I want to know who the heck you animals are."

"My name be Muuzaji," the lion introduced himself. "This lovely lioness here is my wife, Kununua. That tiger over there is Misuli, and finally, meet my baboon friend Ubongo. Now, get on out of here before we rip ya to shreds."

"I don't think so," Simba said, shaking his head. "Not until I find out what you're planning on doing with these creatures."

"This is just the business," Muuzaji told him. "We're only tryin' to make our way in the world."

"Business?" Simba arched an eyebrow. "What kind of business involves trapping innocent creatures?"

"They don't be innocent," said Kununua. "They're just a bunch of simpletons. They don't even have a brain!"

"I think *you're* the ones who don't have brains," Simba retorted. He regarded the imprisoned dinosaurs carefully. "Now, tell me what you've done to them, and what you're using them for. I want to know."

"Why are you so interested, anyways?" asked Muuzaji.

"Because," Simba replied, "I want to know if it's wrong. And if it is, then I'll have to stop you."

The hunters all chuckled at this. "You!" exclaimed the baboon, Ubongo. "I could take care of this little rat in a second with my magic!"

"Magic?" Simba's interest was piqued by this. "You're magical?"

"Who do ya think put the spell on the dinos?" asked Muuzaji. "It makes 'em frozen. They won't be breaking free anytime soon."

"Can I kill 'em, boss?" asked Misuli, raking his deadly claws eagerly across the ground. "I haven't killed a cub in a while."

"What kind of animal are you?" Simba asked, curious. "I've never seen any of your kind before."

"I'm a tiger!" Misuli proudly proclaimed. "We've been thrivin' down here for many years now."

"An entire species that lives underground," Simba said, casually circling around the hunters. "That's interesting. There can't be many of you left now, though. I haven't seen any. Definitely not above."

"You're a top!" Misuli leapt for Simba in anger, but Muuzaji held him back.

"Careful, Misuli!" Muuzaji ordered. "If he's a top, then I bet he's more powerful than any of the dumbos down here!"

"I don't care!" Misuli raged in his leader's face. "He's makin' fun of the fact that I'm the last of my kind!"

"No, he wasn't," Muuzaji replied, throwing the tiger to the ground. "He ain't said nothin'!"

"So... you're the last of your kind," Simba said. "That's very sad, but it won't stop me from killing you if I have to."

"You? Kill me?" laughed Misuli. "What a joke. You're just a tiny little cub. No harm to anyone."

Simba stared at the tiger with cold eyes. "That's where you're wrong."

Muuzaji resisted the urge to shudder. He hated to admit it, but Simba had the eyes of a killer. This cub had seen—maybe even caused—death previously in his life. "Just shut up, Misuli. I'll handle this. So..." He turned to Simba. "You're gonna stop us for tryin' to make a livin' out here?"

"How do you make a living by trapping dinosaurs?" Simba asked.

"Oh, that's easy," Muuzaji replied. "We're gonna break out of this place and sell 'em off to the tops for food. Animals will

pay *anything* to own their own dino. With a little bit of hypnotising from Ubongo, I bet them dinos will do whatever they're told. We'll never have to hunt for food ever again."

Simba's eyes narrowed in anger as the realisation sank in. "It's a slave trade."

"Correct," said Muuzaji. "We simply use Ubongo's magic to round up them dinos and trap 'em here for later."

"Then what's the point of killing those other lions?" Simba asked. "You obviously didn't eat them—you just *pretended* to."

"It's to keep them idiots on the plains away," Muuzaji explained. "We don't want them findin' out about this operation, so we scare 'em away. They worship them dinos like they're gods. To us, they're just a product that's needin' to be sold."

"You're disgusting," Simba told them.

"That's the way of the world, buddy boy," Muuzaji told them. "Now, we can't have you blabbin' to anyone else about this, so I'm afraid we're gonna have to kill ya. Ubongo, smoke him to the ground!"

Simba gasped as a bolt of magical energy was sent flying right towards him. He gasped in surprise—

—and his whole world became one of darkness.

AN: Phew! That's about 4,000 words for this update! A dinosaur slave trade? That's just ridiculous! But not in my stories. I think by this point you've learned to appreciate my absolutely insane imagination. As always, we are coming to the end of this exciting story. Can we expect more twists and turns? You bet!

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: Simba's Wrath

AN: It's that time again, where we come to the exciting conclusion of this story. No twists or turns this time. This story has been quite the exciting romp!

the-mysterious-other: The finale will be long, I can assure you that. I'm not sure whether it'll take you three days to read each chapter, though...

anonymous13: Am I good at describing rotting bodies? It's not a hobby of mine to go out and observe dead corpses or anything like that. It just comes to me...

Chapter Seven: Simba's Wrath

"Blast that snivelling varmint again!" Muuzaji commanded, staring at Ubongo with an eager grin on his face. He was ready to see Simba smoked to the ground. The former Prince of the Pride Lands was lying on the ground unconscious. Unaware that he was seconds away from being annihilated...

"This will teach you to mess with our business!" Ubongo yelled, stretching out his forelegs to blast Simba again. "Ya stupid cub!"

As the baboon got ready to launch another volley of energy at him, Simba's eyes snapped open, and he shot up like a rocket. The hunters barely had time to react before Simba's claws were clasped around the baboon's throat.

"Next time," Simba snarled, strangling the baboon as he thrashed his legs around wildly, "check that I'm not conscious first."

"Get off him!" Muuzaji yelled, diving for Simba. But the cub ducked low, and the leader of the hunters ended up crashing into a stegosaurus's leg.

Simba extended his claws. "You started this," he said, and slashed the baboon across the throat.

The overwhelming gasp from the remaining hunters was chilling. Nala and Haiba stared at each other in horror, unaware that Simba would go to such lengths. He had just killed someone. Committed murder. Without mercy. And that was a line that they *never* crossed. Whenever someone died, it was because there was no other option. This was different. In fact, it looked like Simba was *enjoying* the feel of killing him.

"He just killed him!" Misuli exclaimed, horrified by the cub's actions. "How could you do such a thing?"

Simba glared at the lion, his eyes blazing with fury. Not to mention the truth. "I warned you," he told him. "If I have to kill you, then I will." With an angry yell, he leapt at Muuzaji, claws outstretched.

"Simba, stop it!" Nala cried, grabbing Simba before he could finish off Muuzaji. "This isn't the right way!"

"Shut up!" Simba snapped at her, trying to break free, claws flying all around the place. "This is what's right! We have to kill them before they kill us!"

"Well, if that ain't a warrior, then I don't know what is," Bosi said, looking surprisingly impressed by what Simba had done. "We've been tryin' to rid ourselves of them hunters for ages. He killed one of 'em in just a second!"

"So you *agree* with senseless murder?" Haiba asked, curious to hear Bosi's rather dim opinions. He was right about them not being the smartest animals in the pride... "Isn't that kind of... mean?"

"Hey, they murdered some of us," Bosi defended himself. "It's only fair that we murder some of them! Wouldn't you want to kill someone if they really hurt you?"

Haiba considered this for a moment. "N-no," he stammered, although that wasn't exactly the truth. He was reminded of Tama. The thought of her blackmailing him was more than enough to make his rage levels rise. *I'd like to show her who's boss*, he thought. *Maybe Simba's point about surviving is good after all...*

"I think it's about time we got us some revenge, guys," Muuzaji said, slowly advancing towards Simba, who was still fighting to escape Nala's grip. "Hold him steady, little girl, and we'll let you go."

Nala sighed, knowing that she was in dilemma now. She didn't want Simba to commit senseless murder, but these creeps were going to kill him if she didn't let him go. *You know what you have to do, Nala*, she told herself, her eyes

glowing red briefly.

Nala surrendered to her dark side and released Simba from her grasp, allowing him to leap at Muuzaji. But Misuli intercepted him, and the two crashed to the ground. The tiger roared, opening his powerful jaws and going for Simba's throat.

"You're gonna pay for this," Misuli threatened, pinning the cub down. "You've ruined our business!"

Simba was pleased. Now that the baboon was dead, they wouldn't be able to hypnotise the dinosaurs into responding to orders. No one would be able to order a deadly creature around without any magical powers involved. Their business was over!

"Good," Simba spat. "Now, you can die down here. Alone. You deserve it."

"Why, you little—"

Simba lashed out with a paw, catching the tiger across the eye. Misuli fell onto his back in pain, bleeding profusely. Simba was quick to use this pause to his advantage. He spotted a sharpened stick on the ground. It reminded him of when he killed Nyoka. *Seems suitable enough*, he thought, picking up the stick.

Misuli slowly began to clamber back to his paws, unaware that Simba had the stick held high above his head.

Splutch! With the sound of a squashed watermelon, Simba speared Misuli right through the shoulder. The tiger roared with pain. Simba grinned in pleasure as he slowly twisted the stick around, opening the wound even further.

"Simba, stop it!" Nala cried. She was okay with him just finishing the tiger off—but this was just cruelty! "He's finished!"

"That kid's sick!" Muuzaji exclaimed, neglecting to mention that only yesterday he had been tearing other lions to shreds.

"You brought this on yourself," Simba said, watching as Misuli writhed in pain on the ground. He slowly removed the stick, before slamming it into the tiger's heart. The tiger immediately flopped onto the ground, tongue lolling out as blood dripped from his mouth.

"Let's get out of here," Kununua whispered to her mate.

"I don't think so," Simba said, blocking their path. "I haven't finished with you two yet."

"Get out of our way!" Muuzaji demanded. "We just want to go!"

"It's too late for that now," Simba told them, causing cold chills to run down their spines. "You will pay for your crimes."

"I'm not gonna let you kill us!" Muuzaji said, fear evident in his eyes. "Come on! My mate is pregnant! We only wanted some security for our new family!"

"Oh, don't worry," Simba told them. "*I'm* not going to kill you."

"You're... you're not?" said Muuzaji, both surprised and relieved.

"No," Simba said, and then he pointed at something behind them. "*She* is."

Muuzaji and Kununua slowly turned around—

—and were confronted by the angry face of a tyrannosaur. She growled loudly, baring her sharpened teeth.

The two remaining hunters screamed, but their cries soon died out as the female tyrannosaur clamped them in her jaws and munched them to pieces. Simba frowned in disgust as some blood splattered onto his face. But he soon wiped it off with his paw.

Nala looked away, not wanting to watch the ugly spectacle. *You know it had to be done*, she told herself, her eyes glowing red again. But she blinked and the colour soon went away. She really despised that her dark side was so noticeable. Her father had clearly rubbed off on her in some way...

Haiba slid into the ditch, followed by Bosi. He groaned in annoyance as the baby tyrannosaur hopped over to him, licking him all over the front of his face. "I really hate it when that happens," he grumbled.

Simba and the others watched as the dinosaurs retreated away from the enormous ditch, going back to their normal

routine of eating meat or plants. They refrained from eating any of the cubs. Maybe that was their way of showing gratitude for Simba and his friends releasing them from their evil captors.

"We did it," Bosi said. "We defeated the hunters! Oh, my ma and pa are gonna be so proud of me! If they were still livin', that is."

Simba looked at Nala, smiling. "There we go," he said, satisfied. "Problem solved. Now we can get out of here—and continue with our mission." He then walked off, hoping that they would follow.

Nala just stood there, thunderstruck by the incident. She'd never been in such a bloody situation before. It made her sick to her stomach. *Everything is falling down around us*, she thought despairingly. *When will it end?*

And she had a feeling that the end would arrive very soon indeed.

Haiba walked past her, whispering in her ear. "Still think someone's controlling him?" he asked.

"Yeah," Nala said. "*Definitely*."

"Where were you?" Sarafina cried, as the cubs arrived at the resort. It was very late in the evening when they got back. "We've been worried sick all afternoon! Haven't we, Zazu?"

"Oh, yes," Zazu replied sleepily, perched on a nearby tree branch. "Very worried indeed."

"We took the long way back," Simba lied. "It was a... very long journey. It was like we discovered a whole new world."

"Yeah," Nala agreed. She didn't particularly want to tell her mother the grisly details of their adventure in the underground world, so she played along with Simba's lie. "I'm gonna sleep all through the night after that one."

"At least you're okay," Sarafina said, relieved. "I was beginning to think something horrible had happened."

It did, Nala thought to herself, glaring at Simba. He strode right past her as he owned the place. These days, it seemed like he didn't even care about her any more. All he was concerned with was restoring their home. But, after recent events, Nala often asked herself a question.

What is the point if I'm in love with someone who doesn't love me back?

"Haiba?"

Haiba groaned inwardly as he heard Tama's voice sound from above. He was hoping to get a quick nap in the vine hammock—but clearly Tama hadn't forgotten about their 'arrangement' together.

"What is it, Tama?" he asked, looking upwards to find her sat calmly on a long branch.

"You know what time it is," Tama said. "I was beginning to think that you were trying to run away from me." She dropped down from the branch, smiling at him. "Now, come on. Let's go and have some fun."

She quickly dragged him away, heading for the river on the outskirts of the resort. Simba and Nala would never ever be able to see what Haiba was going to do with her.

It was their little secret.

"Mmm..." Tama moaned as she pushed Haiba onto his back, kissing him aggressively over and over again. "You really have nice fur, Haiba. Feels great against mine." She giggled at him.

"Tama, stop this," Haiba said, more than annoyed by what she was doing. "This is wrong. This is abuse. You know you don't want to do it. What would Tojo think?"

"I have to move on from Tojo," Tama told him. "I can't look back. Otherwise I just... won't be able to survive out here. Now, shut up and kiss me. Or else."

"You know what?" Haiba said, finally giving in to his rage. "I don't care whether Tojo is dead or not. I don't have to do this if I don't want to! Kissing me isn't going to repair you, Tama! No matter how much you think it might!"

Tama shook her head, smiling at him. Haiba could see the insanity in her eyes. She was totally deranged. "No, no," she said. "You don't understand, Haiba. We can... we can begin where Tojo left off. We can make a new relationship. I mean, it's just kissing tonight, but tomorrow..."

She leaned in extra close. "We can have some cubs of our own."

Haiba gasped, his eyes widening. "No," he decided, pushing Tama away and walking off. "I'm outta here."

"You get back here," Tama growled, yanking Haiba by the legs and dragging him towards her. "You will follow my orders. I want a family, and you're going to give it to me!"

"Get real, Tama," Haiba snapped. "You're a freak!"

Tama reacted by striking Haiba across the face. He winced, falling over and smacking his forehead on the ground.

"No one insults me like that," Tama hissed, grabbing Haiba by the throat. "Now, are you going to give me what I want or not? I might just have to tell Simba and Nala how you're taking advantage of my vulnerability..."

Haiba frowned, and lashed out with his claws, slitting Tama's cheek to pieces. She let out a squeal of agony, plunging back against a tree trunk.

"I'm gonna rip your throat out," Tama gasped, clearing sounding weakened, and launched herself at Haiba again.

"You little brat," Haiba snarled, grabbing Tama by the face, impeding her attack. He slammed the back of her head against the trunk of the tree. "You think you can come in here and take control of my life? Is that what you think? *Huh?*" He slapped her across the face, as she began to cry.

"Haiba, wait!" she cried.

But now Haiba didn't stop.

Don't listen to her, he thought. She'll rip you apart. It's kill or be killed.

Haiba yanked Tama up by the back of her head, spotting a large rock lying a few feet away from them both. He forced her over to it, and began to slam her face right into its sharp surface over and over again.

Despite the agonising screams and sickening noises, he kept smashing her face into the rock. It was only when he felt the total absence of life that he dropped Tama's limp body to the ground. Her skull was completely caved in, smothered with blood.

She was well and truly dead.

Haiba backed away, chuckling lightly to himself.

It was only when the horrors of his actions sank in that he began to cry.

Head buried in his blood-stained paws, Haiba's sobs were the only things that could be heard in the jungle.

"What have I done?" he moaned, unable to comprehend his unthinkable crime. "What have I done?"

It was obvious to Haiba now that he couldn't return to the resort. Simba and Nala would find out about Tama by the morning. So his brain scanned through all of the possibilities, and it came up with the most suitable option.

Run.

And so he did.

The End

AN: Yeah... I'm pretty sure you didn't expect that. I have been warning a lot of my readers that the next story will be quite dark. Well, this is why. Haiba has just murdered Tama. Kill or be killed, eh? I can't wait to see your happy reactions... Please don't hurt me.

NEXT TIME: Haiba is on the run, and will do anything to reverse his actions. Luckily, a mad scientist presents him with an interesting deal...

